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PHILIPPINE DAILY
BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS
INQUIRER

NEWS
**UK VARIANT OF CORONAVIRUS DETECTED IN PH**
A4

# GOV'T PRESSED: RETHINK PREFERENCE FOR SINOVAC

**By DJ Yap**
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Calls are mounting to have the government reconsider its "obvious" preference for the coronavirus vaccine of Sinovac BioTech despite its being less effective and more costly, with one opposition senator urging the Department of Health (DOH) to cancel the purchase of 25 million doses of the China-made COVID-19 shot.

The vaccine is called CoronaVac, but people always refer to it by the shorthand for the manufacturer's name, Sinovac.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan asked the country's COVID-19 managers and vaccination planners to reject CoronaVac as an option in the government's multiplatform rollout of the vaccine, citing the latest reports about its unimpressive efficacy rate.

"Sinovac, with just over 50-percent efficacy is six times more expensive than AstraZeneca (of the United Kingdom), which in contrast shows 70-percent efficacy," Pangilinan said in a post on Twitter.

"Sinovac is more expensive yet having almost 20-percent lower efficacy. Given these latest findings, we call on the DOH to cancel the purchase of Sinovac vaccines," Pangilinan added.

Asked to elaborate, Pangilinan said it did not make sense to choose the more expensive and less effective brand.

"By rejecting Sinovac and selecting AstraZeneca or another vaccine with higher efficacy rates, we will be able to vaccinate millions more with better quality vaccines," Pangilinan told the Inquirer in a Viber message.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson also took to Twitter to complain about government pronouncements that only Sinovac shots would be available to A4

## 2 DACERA FRIENDS RECANT: NO DRUG USE

NEWS / A2

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION Seven of the 11 respondents in the police complaint of rape with homicide in connection with the death of flight attendant Christine Dacera on New Year's Day leave the Makati Prosecutor's Office, which began its preliminary investigation on Wednesday. They include (from left) Rommel Galido, John Pascual de la Serna III, Gregorio Angelo de Guzman and Valentine Rosales (far right). Also present were Dacera's family and officers of the Philippine National Police, together with their lawyers. —RICHARD A. REYES

LIFESTYLE / C1
**SOUP BRINGS BACK FOND MEMORIES OF DAD**

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**LOOK, UP IN THE SKY —IT'S A FLYING CADILLAC!**

DOJ CHIEF VOWS MORE CASES

## PHILHEALTH RAPS: 'JUSTICE SLOW, BUT WILL BE SERVED'

**By Marlon Ramos and Melvin Gascon**
@Team_Inquirer

The day of reckoning has just started for corrupt officials of Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth), Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said on Wednesday, promising a string of criminal and administrative cases in connection with irregularities costing billions of pesos that brought the state insurer to the brink of financial collapse. A4

NEWS

### House panel, DILG ready to Cha-cha

As a House committee declared itself to be a constituent assembly that will hold Charter change (Cha-cha) debates, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) submitted to Congress a petition seeking the lifting of "restrictive economic provisions" in the 1987 Constitution. Due to the pandemic, however, the DILG gathered only 500,000 "unverified" signatures online, way below its target of 2 million. —STORIES BY THE INQUIRER STAFF A3

REGIONS

### Baguio health alert up as mercury drops

BAGUIO CITY—As local temperatures start dropping, doctors here will do home visits to check up residents, especially the elderly. Health workers in the pandemic response are monitoring COVID-19 cases as the cool weather and recent Christmas home gatherings raise concerns over a possible surge in infections. The city's coldest morning so far this year was recorded on Jan. 10 at 10.4 degrees Celsius. —STORY BY VINCENT CABREZA A10

WORLD

### US House Dems deciding Trump fate

WASHINGTON—Democrats in the US House of Representatives are gearing for an unprecedented second impeachment of President Donald Trump following his incendiary speech that provoked supporters into storming the US Capitol. The lawmakers are confident they have the support of 217 members, enough to impeach the President. If this happens, Trump will face trial in the Senate to determine his guilt. —STORY BY REUTERS B3

BUSINESS

### PH seen curbing rice imports this year

After being the world's top rice importer for two consecutive years, the country is expected to fall to the No. 2 spot in 2021 as the government concentrates on beefing up local stocks to deal with the current instability of the global rice market. The Department of Agriculture is doubling efforts to improve local palay production to a high of 20.43 million metric tons this year. —STORY BY KARL R. OCAMPO B1